

A Safer Meal: The Importance of Food Protection Managers

DOVER, DE – A national study, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found that restaurants with Certified Food Protection Managers (CFPMs) had fewer of most types of food safety violations. Such food managers receive special training and are responsible for monitoring and managing all food establishment operations. The CFPM must also be knowledgeable about foodborne illness symptoms, how to minimize risk factors, and how make corrective actions if necessary.

Requiring CFPMs is a proactive way to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks in public eating establishments. According to the CDC, each year one in six Americans gets food poisoning likely caused by unsafe food practices either in the home, work, school, health-care facility, food packing facility or restaurant.

The Delaware Food Code requires food establishments to have a Person-in-Charge (PIC) at the time of inspection, who is a CFPM. Because inspections in Delaware are unannounced, the food manager is required to be on duty at all times. Risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness can be minimized through training and active managerial control. A study published in Environmental Health Insights magazine suggests that restaurants with trained and certified food managers had significantly fewer critical food safety violations.

The Delaware Restaurant Association (DRA), in collaboration with the Division of Public Health (DPH), will be conducting a survey to identify the rate of food establishments complying with Certified Food Protection Manager requirements. The findings will ensure that DPH and DRA can identify those types of food establishments that require more education and

outreach as it pertains to the CFPM requirements.

Certification of kitchen managers may affect foodborne illness risk factors in many ways, including better management and better on-the-job training according EHS-Net's study and recommendations, which can be found [here](#).

According to the DRA, challenges faced by restaurants that are trying to reduce the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks include high employee turnover and a labor force comprised of inadequately-trained employees. Employees should have an understanding of the food handling and preparation practices and should follow those practices to mitigate risk factors. CFPMs play an important role in communicating information to food workers about the best practices to reduce foodborne illnesses and should be able to effectively convey information to employees who are not certified in food safety.

DPH staff throughout Delaware work to protect consumers and monitor compliance of food establishments with the Delaware Food Code. DPH accomplishes its food safety mission through the permitting and inspecting of restaurants, mobile units, and other food establishments; educating owners, managers, and employees on food safety issues in their establishments; informing consumers on food safety; and holding activities to increase food safety in Delaware establishments.

You can access more information on the [Delaware Food Code online](#) or call 302-744-4546.

For a listing of all the CFPM courses accepted by DPH, visit the [DPH website here](#). For a list of courses offered by the Delaware Restaurant Association, visit <http://www.delawarerestaurant.org/calendar/> for a list of course dates and times or contact the DRA at 866-DRA-2545 to schedule training.

The Delaware Restaurant Association is the state trade association dedicated to promoting, protecting, and educating

Delaware's food service industry. Delaware's 2,000 restaurants employ 50,000 people with an economic impact of over \$2 billion in annual sales. Delaware Restaurants are the largest small business employer in the state and the largest component of Delaware's tourism industry.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.